Scene Analysis- Glass Breaking

Questions

1. What do we learn about the characters that are involved in the event?

The characters involved in the event of the glass breaking are Nurse Ratched and McMurphy. Nurse Ratched is identified as the authority figure of the ward. Within this scene McMurphy challenges Nurse Ratched’s power by the breaking the glass Nurse’s office. The analogy of the glass breaking represents Nurse Ratched’s power being lost to McMurphy as he is breaking her control of the institution.

1. What are the important themes represented through the events?

Power and individual verses the institute.

Power is represented through:

-McMurphy’s breaking of the glass demonstrating his taking control of Nurse Ratched.

-The routine and schedule of Nurse Ratched is being destroyed and ignored by the patients.

-The scene shows how one power can easily gain power from another person’s lose.

Individual verses the institute

-McMurphy rebelling and going against the rules and regulations of the institute.

-McMurphy is taking back human dignity and independence for what he thinks is right.

1. What language features are used to show characters/themes?

* *“Like a dog worries at a hole”*- this simile that is used to describe McMurphy creates a sense of foreshadowing in the novel. It suggests to the responder that McMurphy will soon return to his antics.
* *Bromden’s Flashback*- gives the responder a look into the mind of Bromden and why he sees and hears things which aren’t really there.
* *“Flushed, reckless look on his face”-* This description of McMurphy during the group meeting also suggests that he will return to his former self.
* *“Few loud minutes”-* this personification shows the intensity of the moment between the patients and Nurse Ratched.
* *“The movement of a tarot-card reader in a glass arcade”-* this metaphor which describes Nurse Ratched implies her fake and machine-like exterior.
* *“Face moved with a ticking noise”-* shows that Nurse Ratched’s time of power and control is coming to an end.
* *“Like tires speeding down a pavement”-* shows the speed of the scene which is about to unfold.
* *“Boot heels cracked lightning”-* this hyperbole emphasises McMurphy’s gain in power as he is walking towards the cabinet.
* *“Swelled out wide”-* this newfound fear in Nurse Ratched implies that she is losing her control over the ward because of McMurphy.
* *“Big as a house”-* this simile that is used to describe McMurphy alludes to the symbolism used throughout the novel of size representing power. By saying the McMurphy is as big as a house it shows that he holds all the power in the ward now.
* *“The glass came apart like water splashing”-* not only does this refer to the glass but also the hold that Nurse Ratched has over the patients; by breaking the glass, McMurphy has broken this hold and ‘freed the patients”.
* *“Like a chalk statue”-* chalk and statues are often used to represent fear so by describing Nurse Ratched in this way, it shows her weaknesses which are now beginning to show.
* *“Brushing the slivers of glass off her hat and shoulders”-* this action on McMurphy’s part clearly juxtaposes his earlier, more violent, behaviour and serves as a reminder to the responder that he is not the ‘bad guy’.

1. Key Quotes

* “They’d got Billy calmed down, and he was walking at the front of the group with a black boy on one side and that white boy from the shock shop on the other side.”
* “Please understand: We do not impose certain rules and restrictions on you without a great deal of thought about their therapeutic value.”
* “That foolish lenience on the part of your parents may have been the germ that grew into your present illness.”
* “This was supposed to be her final victory over him, supposed to establish her rule once and for all. But here he comes and he’s big as a house!”